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New York

President: Mr. Kerim ..... (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 45

Sport for peace and development

(a) Sport for peace and development

Report of the Secretary-General (A/62/325 and Corr.1)

(b) Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal

Draft resolution A/62/L.2

The President: I would like to say that I assume that the Olympic spirit will prevail today, as Pierre de Coubertin would have liked, and that attendance by Member States will be more impressive.

I give the floor to the representative of China to introduce draft resolution A/61/L.2.

Mr. Liu Qi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): As President of the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Games of the 29th Olympiad, and on behalf of the Chinese delegation, I have the great honour to introduce draft resolution A/62/L.2, entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal".

The Olympic Truce, a time-honoured tradition, has its roots in the Olympic truce treaty among Greek city-states participating in the ancient Olympic games, which had a history of more than 1,000 years. The treaty was thus observed longer than any other peace accord in history. The modern Olympic movement, which came into being in 1894, has inherited the traditions of the ancient Olympic games. At its very heart lies the pledge to safeguard world peace and promote the common development of mankind, while at the same time upholding the Olympic spirit: swifter, higher, stronger.

The United Nations and the Olympic Movement are natural allies. The Olympic ideal accords with the United Nations purpose of promoting peace. Since 1993, the General Assembly has adopted seven resolutions on the Olympic Truce, urging all Member States to observe the Truce. The United Nations Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2), adopted in 2000, also urged Member States to observe the Olympic Truce and to support the promotion of peace and human understanding through sport and the Olympic ideal.

All of that amply demonstrates that the United Nations and its Member States attach great importance to the role played by sport and the Olympic ideal in promoting world peace and that they hope to create a favourable atmosphere and conditions for the success of the Olympic Games.

In line with past practice, China, as the host country for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad, has proposed the draft resolution entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal" (A/62/L.2). The draft resolution not only captures the quintessential elements of previous resolutions, but also features the three main concepts

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that are at the core of the Beijing Olympic Games, namely, the Green Olympics, the High-tech Olympics and the People's Olympics, and their vision to achieve a harmonious development of society. It recognizes the increasingly important role of sport in the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals and reaffirms the commitments undertaken in this regard by the heads of State and Government gathered at the 2005 World Summit. The draft resolution urges Member States to observe the Olympic Truce during the Games of the XXIX Olympiad in Beijing, which will take place from 8 to 24 August 2008, and the subsequent Paralympic Games in Beijing, which will take place from 6 to 17 September 2008.

The draft resolution also welcomes efforts of the International Olympic Committee and the National Olympic Committees of United Nations Member States to undertake concrete actions to promote and strengthen a culture of peace and harmony based on the spirit of the Olympic Truce and calls upon all Member States to continue to use sport as an instrument to promote peace, dialogue and reconciliation.

China has received constructive comments and suggestions from many delegations during the consultations on the draft resolution. The draft resolution is sponsored by 183 countries. On behalf of the Chinese Government and the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad, I would like to convey my thanks to all countries for their support for the draft resolution. It is my sincere hope that the General Assembly will adopt the draft resolution by consensus. The adoption of the draft resolution will help enhance appreciation and understanding by all peoples of the Olympic ideal of peace and will contribute to world peace.

The Olympic Truce is not only the ideal of the Olympic movement but also the common aspiration of all peace-loving peoples around the world. The theme of the Games of the XXIX Olympiad — "One world, one dream" — and its core concepts of the Green Olympics, the High-tech Olympics and the People's Olympics give full expression to the common desire of the Chinese people and peoples of the entire world for peace, progress, friendly relations and harmonious development. To that end, the Beijing Organizing Committee has launched various activities to promote the Olympic Truce, enhance understanding of the Olympic Truce in China and throughout the world and increase the influence of the Olympic ideal of peace.

We have organized a series of events to promote the concept of peace, including the campaign to solicit songs for the Olympic Games; the "Fuwa — the Olympic mascots — bring good luck to the world" campaign; and an Olympic sculpture exhibition. We have named the Olympic torch relay the Journey of Harmony, a name that captures the vision of peace, harmony and cooperation. We have distributed Olympic readers and wall charts to schools designated Olympic Education Model Schools, and have launched the Heart-to-Heart Partnership Programme and a Beijing Olympic Youth Camp. These educational programmes are sowing the seeds of peace, friendship and progress among the public, in particular among young people. During the Beijing Olympic and Paralympic Games, a wall for peace and friendship will be erected at the Olympic and Paralympic villages to collect signatures from athletes and other people and to appeal for observance of the Olympic Truce and the promotion of world peace.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) and its President, Mr. Jacques Rogge, have been working tirelessly to promote the Olympic ideal of peace. I take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation for their commitment. Thanks to the concerted efforts of the IOC and the parties concerned, the International Olympic Truce Foundation and the International Olympic Truce Centre have been established, contributing to the promotion of the Olympic ideal of peace worldwide.

We also thank Mr. Adolf Ogi, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace, for his hard work, and we will continue to support the work of his Office.

Peace and development are two major themes in today's world. Unfortunately, regional conflicts and local turbulence still occur, making our quest for world peace more of an uphill journey. The Olympic Games may not change the world overnight, but we have every reason to expect that the Olympic Truce, an ancient Olympic tradition, will continue to inspire the world in striving for lasting peace and common prosperity.

I wish to take this opportunity to call on all Member States to adhere to the purposes and principles of the United Nations, to observe the Olympic Truce and to promote world peace. In 282 days, the Olympic

Flame — burning bright for solidarity, friendship and peace — will be lit in the main stadium of the Beijing Olympic Games. That is of great significance both to the Olympic Movement and to China, an ancient civilization with a time-honoured history. The international community looks forward to the success of the Beijing Olympic Games. At present, all of the preparatory work is taking place as scheduled. All the venues will be complete by the end of the year, except for the National Stadium, which will be ready in early 2008 in accordance with plans for the opening ceremony.

The Beijing Olympic competition schedule has been finalized. To facilitate the coverage of the Games by the foreign media, last year the Chinese Government formulated regulations on reporting activities in China by foreign journalists during the Beijing Olympic Games and the preparatory period. In addition, various programmes are already up and running, including preparations for the opening and closing ceremonies, the torch relay outside the Chinese mainland, media and communications, Olympic education and culture, and volunteer training.

I am convinced that, with the support of all United Nations Member States and their peoples, the games of the twenty-ninth Olympiad will surely be a complete success.

The President: I would like to warmly welcome Mr. Jacques Rogge, President of the International Olympic Committee to the General Assembly, and Mr. Liu Qi, President of the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Games of the Twenty-Ninth Olympiad.

Today, the General Assembly will hold a debate under agenda item 49, "Sport for peace and development", and consider draft resolution A/62/L.2 regarding the contribution that the Olympics can make to that overarching goal.

In 2005, world leaders committed to promoting the role of sport in creating peace, achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and improving public health. The convening power of sport is unsurpassed, even by the United Nations. While the United Nations has 192 Member States, the Association of National Olympic Committees has 205 members. As the President of the Beijing Organizing Committee, Mr. Liu Qi, rightly pointed out, the United Nations and the Olympic Movement are natural allies.

Sport helps to break down social, religious and ethnic barriers by promoting tolerance and mutual understanding. Sport can change lives for the better by building self-esteem, leadership skills, community spirit and bridges across ethnic and communal divides. When teams and individuals come together to share their common passion for sport, everyday differences are set aside. Rivalries remain, but they are fought over goals, fastest times or longest jumps. Sporting spectacles provide the opportunity to transcend everyday differences for the crowds that come to enjoy them.

Sport has also sometimes played a decisive role in diplomatic life and in re-establishing good relationships between countries. That is the embodiment of the ancient Greek concept of ekecheria, or "Olympic Truce". The General Assembly considers this concept to be an important part of promoting international understanding and maintaining peace. The fact that there are over 180 sponsors of the draft resolution on building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal is a testament to the universal nature of sport and its importance in human society.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate China on the honour of holding the twenty-ninth Olympic Games in Beijing in 2008. The main themes of the Games — "Green Olympics", "High-tech Olympics" and "People's Olympics" — are strongly supported by this house. I recently visited the Olympic sites in Beijing and noticed with great pleasure the enthusiasm and pride on the faces of the Chinese people who are constructing them.

Sport contributes to economic and social development. It improves health and personal growth, in particular for young people, and provides real alternatives to violence and crime. The United Nations works closely with the International Olympic Committee to develop strategic partnerships with the international sport community to promote education, health, HIV/AIDS prevention, gender equality, environmental protection, peace and reconciliation.

The Secretary-General's report, entitled "Sport for development and peace: progress and prospects" (A/62/325), sets out many concrete examples of initiatives that Member States, United Nations funds, programmes and agencies, non-governmental organizations and the private sector have undertaken to

promote the agenda to implement the three-year Action Plan nationally and internationally. I would like to commend those Member States that have reported taking concrete steps to enhance national policies and strategies that advance sport for development and peace, including by addressing gender equality and women's empowerment.

I would also like to note the work undertaken by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Liberia to use sport to bring previously warring factions together; by the United Nations Population Fund, working with national Governments and sports associations to use sport as a vehicle to promote life skills and responsible sexual behaviour to prevent HIV/AIDS; and by the United Nations Development Programme to mobilize resources to achieve the MDGs in Africa, Asia and Latin America by organizing football matches against poverty, and in Burundi, Rwanda, Sri Lanka and Indonesia, where sport has been integrated into post-conflict and humanitarian programmes.

However, the Secretary-General recommends a more systematic follow-up by all Member States and United Nations bodies to more effectively use sport as a tool to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, and greater recognition of its value to promote healthy lives and peace.

If we are going to build a world of greater tolerance, mutual understanding and peace, sport must continue to be used to channel energies away from aggression and self-destruction and into learning and self-respect. That is, indeed, the essence of the Olympic spirit and ideal.

Mrs. Moutawakel (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): It is an honour and a privilege for me to address the Assembly in my capacity as Minister for Youth and Sport of the Government of His Majesty the King of Morocco, and as an Olympic champion and member of the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

Ever since the establishment of ekecheria, or "Olympic Truce", in ancient Greece, the permanent immunity of the Olympia sanctuary has been recognized. Athletes, artists and their families, as well as ordinary pilgrims, were able to travel safely in order to participate in and attend the Olympic Games and then return home. As the opening of the Games approached, the sacred Truce was advocated and announced by people travelling from one citadel to another to transmit the message.

It is on the basis of that ancient international agreement that the IOC took the initiative of ensuring respect for the Olympic Truce, with the support of the General Assembly, in a world where armed conflicts are constantly increasing. Thus, at its forty-eighth session, the General Assembly adopted on 25 October 1993 a resolution on respect for the Olympic Truce, of which the Kingdom of Morocco was a co-sponsor. At that session — a historic one for the Olympic Movement — another resolution was adopted proclaiming 1994 as the International Year for Sport and the Olympic Ideal, commemorating the centenary of the IOC, founded in 1894 at the Sorbonne University in Paris by the French pedagogue Baron Pierre de Coubertin.

It seems clear to me that the basic principles of the Olympic Charter are very closely linked to the objectives of the United Nations. The effort to educate and protect young people so that they can help build a better and peaceful world is a noble objective that the Kingdom of Morocco has always supported by sponsoring United Nations resolutions in that area. The social and universal dimension of sport has been frequently stressed by His Majesty King Mohammed VI, as evidenced by the special importance that the Government of Morocco attaches to making all sports available to everyone throughout the country for the well-being of young people and the population as a whole.

Sport is an instrument that can usefully serve to promote peace, dialogue, reconciliation, solidarity and the search for diplomatic and peaceful solutions. Sport also involves competition and an effort to surpass not only an adversary, but oneself as well. It represents a civilized approach involving civilized behaviour in strict respect for rules.

Many United Nations institutions have successfully cooperated with the Olympic Movement in the humanitarian sphere by popularizing measures through the spokesmanship of world-renowned athletes. The United Nations has also worked to promote sport for the building of peace. The substantial contribution of sport to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals has not only been highlighted, but is stressed in resolution 55/2 of

8 September 2000, entitled United Nations Millennium Declaration.

Sport is a human right. The Charter of Physical Education and Sport, adopted by UNESCO in 1978, stipulates that all human beings have the fundamental right to physical education and sport. Similarly, the Convention on the Rights of the Child recognizes the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women also stresses the importance of access to sport. Women have the right and the capacity to be involved at all levels of social life. It is therefore our duty to expand the role of women in society and to make it easier for them to assume positions of responsibility. I am pleased and proud to note that there are seven women ministers in the current Government of Morocco under the leadership of Prime Minister Abbas El Fassi.

We are also all concerned about protecting the environment. Although significant progress has been made since the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, the IOC was the first body to ensure that its Earth Covenant was signed by all national Olympic committees and international federations at the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games. The main issue, however, is that, when they engage in sport, human beings want to do so in an unpolluted environment, thus helping to protect the natural world that fills us with joy and gives us food and drink. To be sure, the Olympic Games and sport cannot make the world better definitively, but sport requires sharing, gives men and women the opportunity to get in good physical shape, and helps children to understand the meaning of victory, excellence and team spirit.

I ran for the pleasure of sport. That opened so many horizons for me and helped me to deal with numerous social pressures. I consider myself today to be an ambassador of sport and of my country, duty-bound to share the experience that I earned so dearly, as well as the true value of sport in comforting all those who suffer under prejudice and unequal opportunities.

Volunteers are the most important resource that sport enjoys in its development. It is therefore necessary to promote the work of volunteers who serve communities in a spirit of solidarity. However, we need to combat such scourges as drugs, doping and HIV/AIDS in order to protect the health and well-being of our young people. Violence and racism in the context of sport have also become an issue of serious concern, and we must therefore stress a policy of preventive education to ensure that they do not spread, particularly among young people.

In August 2005, the Kingdom of Morocco hosted the Second Pan-African Youth Leadership Summit and identified its priority objective as mobilizing young people through sport and encouraging actions undertaken by private and public partners to raise young Moroccans' awareness of the benefits of sport, education, health, development and peace. In application of the principle of sport for all and in keeping with General Assembly resolution 61/10, entitled "Sport as a means to promote education, health, development and peace", Morocco has undertaken a series of activities to ensure that sport is understood as the right of all individuals, without distinction of race or social class.

The sport policy adopted by the Kingdom of Morocco has allowed us to promote activities for young people in rural and exurban environments and to prioritize the participation of girls and women in sport. Our policy has had the positive impact of significantly raising the number of members of national sport federations. In 2006, it helped over 292,000 young people by instituting a national sport programme involving sports schools and awareness-raising activities for various sports, as well as inter-communal tournaments. Moreover, Morocco's resolve to ensure the participation of disabled people in sport has made sport a tool of social integration for that sector of the population by encouraging the disabled to participate in various international sporting events.

The national human development initiative launched by His Majesty King Mohammed VI on 18 May 2005 attaches particular importance to sport in the implementation of development projects throughout the country. It recognizes that participation is critical to the success of sporting activities designed to benefit the youth of Morocco. Indeed, the projects that have been undertaken in the context of that initiative have created a true socio-cultural dynamic in the less prosperous rural and urban districts through the organization of events and the construction of sports facilities. In 2006, over 70,000 people, including 26,000 women, participated in sporting events, and

21 sports facilities were constructed, while 13 others are in the process of completion.

I was privileged and honoured to participate as an athlete in the Olympic Games and through my responsibilities in the international Olympic family to contribute, on behalf of my country, to the implementation of the Olympic ideal that is dear to all of us and should guide our steps as we seek to build a world of peace, development and well-being for all. My presence here in the General Assembly is, in fact, but the simple continuation of my country's commitment to implementing the aims and principles of the United Nations and to promoting and applying the Olympic ideal.

In that regard, I take this opportunity to express my country's support for draft resolution A/62/L.2, entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal". As a sponsor of the draft resolution, Morocco seeks to demonstrate its tireless support for the principles and ideals contained therein.

I also take this pleasant opportunity to congratulate the people and Government of China, which are preparing to host the summer Olympics in August 2008. My delegation is convinced that the games to be held in that great country, with its millennial civilization, will be an opportunity once again to reaffirm our devotion to Olympic values and will certainly make a significant contribution to renewing the Olympic ideal.

The Kingdom of Morocco is convinced that sport is a preparation for life that guarantees the development of the individual and the enhancement of the individual's ability to serve sustainable development, community and country. Better yet, sport, which propagates such humanist values as tolerance and understanding among peoples, is an indispensable element and enduring school of life that we must continue to cultivate to ensure peace and solidarity in the international arena.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea, who will speak on behalf of the Asian States.

Ms. Park (Republic of Korea) (*spoke in Chinese*): On behalf of the Asian States, the delegation of the Republic of Korea is speaking in support of the draft resolution entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal". We are convinced that the August 2008 Olympic Games to be held in Beijing under the themes "Green Olympics", "High-tech Olympics" and "People's Olympics" will be crowned with success.

As a country of Asia, which has twice hosted the Olympic Games, the Republic of Korea expects the Beijing Games — the third to be held on our continent — will contribute to world peace and conciliation, as well as to regional peace and reconciliation. We also hope that Members will respect the Olympic Truce and support the initiative of sport for human development.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Peru, who will speak on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. Voto-Bernales (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Next year, Beijing will host the twenty-ninth Olympic Games from 8 to 24 August and the 2008 Beijing Paralympic Games from 6 to 17 September. Those events will focus the world's attention on thousands of athletes who will do their best in the practice of a number of activities within the 35 Olympic sporting disciplines.

The impressive mobilization of resources, efforts and dreams that are part of the Olympic Games also offers another opportunity to recall the Olympic ideal and to use sport as a means to promote peace and understanding among human beings. The embodiment of that ideal involves the athletes, their trainers, the judges, the sports authorities and the many others who will gather in Beijing next year. However, it is also an opportunity to promote the ideal of peace through the observance of the Olympic Truce. We hope that the Truce will be observed around the world, and that, at the very least, the clash of arms and the tragedy of war will be suspended during the celebration of the Olympic Games. The Olympic Truce also must be an occasion to open a space for dialogue, peace and reconciliation where conflicts and violence are entrenched.

The practice of sport is also an opportunity to promote the development of human beings. It is therefore necessary to recall the important role that sport should play in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals agreed in 2000, as well as the commitments assumed in that regard by our heads of State and Government at the 2005 Summit. The United Nations must continue supporting such

initiatives in order to put the incentives and potential resulting from the practice of sport within reach of all human beings.

Taking such considerations into account, and on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, I am pleased to express the support of our region for the draft resolution submitted by the delegation of China under the title "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal", as well as our commitment to helping ensure that the Olympic ideal is the best legacy of the Olympic and Paralympics Games that Beijing will host in 2008.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Benin, who will speak on behalf of the African States.

Mr. Ehouzou (Benin) (*spoke in French*): The African Group thanks you, Sir, for convening this plenary meeting of the General Assembly on the importance of promoting sport for peace and development. We thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the item under consideration.

We welcome the presence here today of the President of the International Olympic Committee, the President of the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Games of the Twenty-Ninth Olympiad, and Mrs. Moutawakel, whose name is well known among young Africans because of the extraordinary feats of prowess she has accomplished, thereby earning special renown for African women and African sports.

The report offers a thorough overview of the various aspects and issues involved. It identifies in a very explicit and informative way the progress achieved during the first year of the three-year road map for the implementation of the United Nations Action Plan to strengthen the contribution of sports to peace and development.

In describing activities carried out at various levels, the report helps us to appreciate the extent to which sport has been instrumental in fostering peace and development. We commend the fact that the report encompasses all actors and stakeholders, with due regard for the dynamic of their mobilization, and accounts for the policies and strategies applied.

Mr. Jallow (Gambia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The report attests to the flourishing in many countries of the invaluable potential of sport as a tool for strengthening international peace and security and understanding among the people of the United Nations. The activities carried out have given true meaning to the spirit of the Olympic Truce. We welcome the peacebuilding initiatives launched in countries emerging from conflict, and especially the assistance provided to them in restoring their full participation in the world Olympic Movement and international events. Similarly, the report shows that sport has been a powerful lever in the pursuit of the internationally agreed development goals, especially the Millennium Development Goals, and the high value assigned to social integration efforts targeting the various categories of people with special needs.

We welcome with genuine satisfaction the manifold partnerships and initiatives that have paved the way for a worldwide mobilization involving not only Member States, but also the United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies, as well as governmental and non-governmental organizations and sports organizations. We particularly commend the United Nations Office of Sport for Development and Peace, and especially the Special Adviser, for their endeavours to ensure the necessary support for the most important events staged in the process of implementing the Action Plan. It is worth highlighting in this debate the fact that the Office displayed a high degree of commitment by organizing the Global Youth Leadership Summit in 2006, an outstanding initiative for which it deserves full recognition.

We commend the Special Advisor for his endeavours to help establish close cooperation between the African Union and the European Union, with the full involvement of African institutions, devoted to promoting the development of sporting activities in African countries.

As regards the draft resolution entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal" and the issues it addresses, we should like to place on record the adherence of the African Group, which shares the concerns motivating it and the solicitations it contains.

In less than a year, the twenty-ninth Olympic Games will take place in China. We welcome the resolve of the Government and people of China to perpetuate that global sporting event, which will take

place in the spirit that was born with the first games in ancient times. The modern Olympic Games represent a meeting of young people for peace in 2008 in full compliance with international standards, because sport promotes the building of a better world and encourages development, including the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals. We congratulate China for having earnestly assumed the task of organizing the Olympic Games to be held in Beijing, in accordance with international norms under the motto "One World, One Dream", as well for its joint endeavours in the social field at the local, national, regional and global levels.

Africa will make its contribution to the observance of the Olympic Truce called for in the draft resolution. No other continent needs more than Africa to harness the positive energy generated by sport for such encounters, mutual understanding and reconciliation. It is in the interest of African Governments and peoples to take advantage of that opportunity to enhance awareness of the need to foster the culture of peace within and among the countries through the promotion of dialogue by maximizing the impetus anticipated from active participation in the forthcoming Beijing Olympiads.

Mr. Maurer (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): My delegation has taken note with great satisfaction of the Secretary-General's report entitled "Sport for development and peace: progress and prospects", which he has submitted to the General Assembly at its sixty-second session to review the steps taken over the past year to implement the three-year Action Plan included in last year's report of the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General's report recalls yet again the source of the enthusiasm for sport for development and peace. Sport is an effective and efficient tool for meeting so many of humanity's challenges. As reported, many Member States, as well as United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies, have benefited over the past year from sport in successfully addressing such pressing issues as racism, the plight of street children, gender inequality, traumatized youth and obesity all around the world. It is all the more encouraging as a clear sign that the International Year for Sport and Physical Education in 2005 and previous General Assembly resolutions are having a lasting effect. Sport is no longer seen merely as a desirable asset; it is now recognized as a cost-effective tool for advancing human development. The fact that this shift has been achieved within only a few years is remarkable in and of itself.

Switzerland is therefore pleased by the Secretary-General's decision to renew the mandate of his Special Adviser on Sport for Development and Peace. The current Special Adviser and his support team have again this year delivered a convincing performance and Switzerland thanks them for their fruitful efforts. However, we agree with the recent statement of the Secretary-General that their work is not finished.

The Special Adviser must remain the global advocate to lead the efforts of the United Nations system to promote sport as a tool for development and peace. Moreover, as reflected in the Secretary-General's report, the Special Adviser is in a unique position to facilitate partnerships across all sectors of society. The United Nations needs a Special Adviser to pursue that useful and important task.

Finally, the Special Adviser represents the Secretary-General and the United Nations system at various global sporting events, such as the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing. That allows him not only to promote sport for peace and development, but also directly to address people around the globe on behalf of the United Nations.

Since its inception, Switzerland has been one of the main supporters of the Office of the Special Adviser. In addition, together with the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations, we chair the Group of Friends of Sport for Development and Peace, composed of 28 permanent representatives to the United Nations.

To date, the status of the Office of the Special Adviser has been provisional and somewhat uncertain. Given the Secretary-General's recent decision to renew the Special Adviser's mandate, Switzerland, on behalf of the Group of Friends, has been collaborating with the Office of the Special Adviser and the Secretariat, along with all other interested Members, to identify feasible options for a more stable arrangement. We therefore welcome the Secretariat's plans to establish a trust fund on sport for development and peace within the secretariat in Geneva, with a point of contact in New York.

The formal establishment of an Office of the Special Adviser would be a strong signal that the United Nations intends to continue promoting the use

of sport as a tool for advancing development and peace. Moreover, we hope that the new arrangement will ease the way for more Member States to provide financial support for the activities of the Special Adviser. There is urgent need for such support and we call on them all to provide additional resources to enable the Special Adviser's team adequately to support the core functions of the Special Adviser. Switzerland is prepared to continue to do so. We also hope that the General Assembly will have the opportunity at this session to decide on a resolution on sport for peace and development. Such a resolution could welcome a more stable structure, confirm its strategic orientation and ask the Secretary-General to report back on this issue at the sixty-third session of the General Assembly.

My delegation takes this opportunity to express its full support for the draft resolution entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal". We are convinced that such initiatives can have concrete results and ensure that the Games are conducted in peace.

Mr. Pataki (United States of America): Today, the Assembly has the honour of invoking the spirit of the Olympic Truce. For several Olympiads, the United Nations has advocated the Olympic Truce with a view to protecting, as far as possible, the interests of the athletes and sport in general, and to contributing to the quest for peaceful and diplomatic solutions to conflicts.

It is a distinct privilege to welcome as witnesses to our work this morning members of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), led by IOC President Jacques Rogge and including senior American members Ms. Anita DeFrantz and Mr. James Easton. Further, it is with delight that the United States delegation notes the presence of the United States Olympic Committee, led by its Chief of International Relations, Mr. Robert Fasulo. The distinguished service of those leaders and countless other volunteers has indeed built a better and more peaceful world through sport and the Olympic ideal. Let me just add that it is an honour for me, as a former Governor of the state of New York, which is proud to have twice hosted the winter Olympics, to rise in honour of this delegation.

The practice of heralding an Olympic Truce during the games to enable the safe passage and participation of attendees through areas of conflict is among the oldest of accords, dating from 776 BC. History reveals that the Olympic Truce has transcended differences whenever people meet people on the fields of fair play.

As has been the case on eight occasions in this Hall since 1993, the United States is honoured to be among the sponsors of today's draft resolution proclaiming the Olympic Truce, entitled "Building a better and more peaceful world through sport and the Olympic ideal".

But it is not so much that the Assembly proclaims the Truce as that its action today essentially validates the natural, truce-like atmosphere that prevails throughout the world community whenever countries meet on Olympic fields. In that sense, the Olympic Truce was revived not by this Assembly in 1993; rather, it was revived upon the convening of the modern Olympic Games themselves in 1896. As in ancient times, the Olympic Truce's central purpose has been to enable the safe passage and participation of all concerned with the Games. Indeed, it has contributed to that end through the centuries during war and peace.

Historical interpretations differ slightly. Did the ancient games come before the Truce among warring States, or was the ancient Truce necessary for the passage and participation of those who were otherwise enemies to meet at ancient Olympia? What is certain is that the Olympic Truce, attributed to the Oracle at Delphi, is at the pinnacle of the principles and purposes of Olympism.

To understand better the heritage of the Truce, Olympic historians are now identifying more closely the wording of the ancient Truce. They know that it was inscribed on a discus solemnly displayed in the Temple of Hera adjacent to the ancient stadium at Olympia.

The world witnessed extraordinary human achievement in the shadow of that temple, not only centuries ago, but in recent months. Superhuman efforts contained by mere metres the rampaging fires that nearly engulfed the ancient sites of Olympia. Brave firefighters preserved the sites from which the heralds were sent forth to call for the safe passage of all the Games. The ferocious fire threatened the heart of the Olympic Movement; the fire was overcome. Having been tamed, now it will ignite the Olympic torch on its way from the ancient fields to modern Beijing.

Today's draft resolution exhorts the world to overcome similar threats — geopolitical threats — and to similarly tame them so as to ignite humankind to pursue the goals and ideals of international understanding, security and prosperity, as envisioned in the United Nations Charter.

Today, Member States adopt the Olympic Truce at the United Nations. Next August, competitors will swear the athletes' oath of fair play at the opening ceremonies. Let those solemn practices inspire all others to make their own truces with conflicts in their lives that keep them from pursuing their own goals and ideals. Bringing the Olympic Truce closer to home takes us from being spectators of excellence to being actual participants. Let today's draft resolution be implemented at all levels: intergovernmental, national, community, household and personal.

Intergovernmentally, the Olympic Truce will continue to enliven various forms of United Nations collaborations in the field to promote peace through sport. Nationally, the Olympic Truce might be further interpreted to suggest a time-out from societal unrest as each country supports its Olympic competitors. Communities and households can draw heavily on the example of Olympic accomplishment, and so inspired might commit to excellence in everyday pursuits. Individual witnesses to the Games can see fair play at work, and so moved might commit to fighting temptations that otherwise would keep them from realizing their goals and ideals.

So today, our consideration here reminds the world to prepare for the forthcoming Games in spirit as well as in body. Sport is not an end in itself, but rather a means to educate the youth of the world for the harmonious development of mankind.

To promote the Olympic Truce into concrete action, the IOC established the International Olympic Truce Foundation, which is based in Athens. Its programmes lead to global support and observance of the Olympic Truce and to the steady shaping of a culture of peace. To promote dialogue, the Foundation conducts the prestigious International Forum on Sport for Peace and the Olympic Truce that meets biennially in Olympia.

Promoting such initiatives in favour of the Olympic Truce requires partnerships among the members of the Olympic family, international and national organizations and non-governmental organizations that contribute to the cause of peace. Above all, the Truce and its initiatives are those of the people of the world for the people of the world.

The United States delegation recognizes and supports opportunities such as today's draft resolution for building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal.

The Acting President: I should like to inform members that, immediately following the adjournment of this meeting, there will be an informal segment to hear a statement by the President of the International Olympic Committee.

Mr. Briz Gutiérrez (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to begin by thanking the Secretary-General for the report that forms the basis of today's debate, as contained in document A/62/325 and entitled "Sport for development and peace: progress and prospects".

We also welcome the efforts of Mr. Adolf Ogi, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace, and his contribution to the dissemination of messages regarding the value of sports for development.

My delegation fully associates itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Peru on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States regarding draft resolution A/62/L.2, entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal". I should like to take this opportunity to make some specific comments on the broader subject of sport for peace and development. The Government of the Republic of Guatemala attaches great importance to that subject, because physical activity for health as well as sport and recreation in all their forms are considered a right of all Guatemalans.

Since the signing of the Agreement on a Firm and Lasting Peace in 1996, the Ministry of Culture and Sports has made every effort to contribute to its implementation. That institution has aimed all of its programmes and activities at building a culture of peace based on the attitudes and values developed by Guatemalan society. Mindful of Guatemalan multiculturalism, the Ministry seeks to strengthen peaceful coexistence through socio-cultural exchanges, respect for differences, appreciation of creativity, social organization and links between human beings

and between them and nature — all in a context of long-term activities to promote peace and sustainable human development.

Recently, the Ministry of Culture and Sports, together with the Presidency of the Republic of Guatemala, has implemented a programme to bring recreation to detention centres. The programme consists of promoting sport as a means of social integration, rehabilitation and equal opportunity. In addition, a social reintegration programme is aimed at individuals and groups considered socially at risk: prisoners, members of street groups, child workers and refugees, including handicapped members of such groups.

Among the activities carried out with these groups, we should mention schools for chess, training and recreation, aimed at juvenile delinquents; sport events for street children, workers and shantytown residents; national barrier-free games and a chess school for the blind. There are also other initiatives that involve recreational sports training schools, such as the "Peace Bowl" rural soccer championship and sports coaching for disabled persons, and programmes to exchange war toys for educational toys, supported by volunteers from civil society.

Furthermore, specific programmes have been developed for children, young people and older adults. The children's programme provides children with sport and recreation opportunities through various activities enabling them to use free time in a healthful way. It encourages children to participate in sports such as athletics, basketball and soccer, and it seeks to promote moral and social values through physical activities. The main objective of the youth programme is to promote productive activity by young people through sports and to identify, support and strengthen youth leaders who can promote sports in their communities. The programme for older adults, aimed at those aged 50 and above, seeks to improve their quality of life through physical, recreational and cultural activities. It is worth noting that 75 per cent of those participating in this programme are women.

My delegation welcomed the entry into force of the International Convention against Doping in Sport on 1 February 2007 and wishes to report that it is already under consideration by the Congress of the Republic for approval. Likewise, Guatemala was also pleased to have successfully hosted the 119th session of the International Olympic Committee in July. We are grateful for the support of all those who participated, and we hope to see them in our country once again.

Furthermore, I wish to stress the need for continued efforts to fully incorporate sport and physical education into development programmes. Appropriate assistance should also be given to developing countries in order to mobilize the resources necessary to improve sports infrastructures and facilities, which benefit the health and wholesome development of children and young people.

I also wish to commend the work carried out in collaboration with United Nations peacekeeping missions and with the support of the International Olympic Committee. We are confident that such initiatives and programmes will also be implemented with the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti to benefit the Haitian people.

In conclusion, my delegation reaffirms the importance of implementing strategies that incorporate sport more effectively into various health, education, development and peace programmes at the local, national, regional and global levels. In that connection, we welcome the initiative of the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Development Programme, in collaboration with the United Nations New York Office of Sport for Development and Peace. The initiative is aimed at implementing a programme in Central America to use sport as an instrument for the inclusion of young people and the promotion of peace.

Mr. Muñoz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am speaking on behalf of Chile to express our support for draft resolution A/62/L.2, entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal", just introduced by Mr. Liu Qi, President of the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games. We are convinced that sport is an effective vehicle for promoting not only peace and development, but also an environment of tolerance, dialogue and respect — which are so necessary in today's world — in the spirit of the Olympic Truce.

I should like to recall that the link between sport and peace is not just theoretical. In the case of Haiti and the United Nations Mission in that country, it has hosted soccer teams from Brazil and Chile, impressing on tens of thousands of Haitians the idea of solidarity

and peace through sport. We should have more such occasions.

On behalf of Chile, I should also like to say that we received with great interest the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Sport for development and peace: progress and prospects" (A/62/325 and Corr.1), which describes the first year of implementation of the Action Plan, which we adopted some time ago. We are optimistic about the Plan, because we consider it an excellent road map that will enable us not only to guide the efforts of Governments, civil society and multilateral organizations, but also to have a very positive impact through the expansion and strengthening of plans and programmes being implemented in all of our countries.

One problem that we find particularly worrisome derives from the relationship between sport and physical health. According to international studies, people who do not engage in physical exercise form a high-risk group with significantly higher mortality rates than people who exercise sufficiently.

For that reason, this draft resolution presented by China, as well as others that will be presented soon, should contribute to the implementation of public policies to promote sport and physical education, derived from the creation of a worldwide culture of sport and physical education. This programme should bring together young people, adults and seniors; handicapped athletes; men and women; inhabitants of developed and developing countries — everyone should come together to improve their quality of life and contribute to a less violent, healthier, more tolerant world — all within the Olympic ideal.

Of course, promoting sporting activities and physical education is the sovereign responsibility of each country. But at the multilateral level there is a need for a permanent, sufficiently representative structure to allow us to cooperate with national efforts. In principle, we are pleased that the Office of the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Sport, Development and Peace was established in Geneva, with a liaison office in New York, under the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. However, we need such a structure to be established in a permanent way with sufficient financial resources to suitably carry out its mandate. That financing should be stable and predictable and should preferably come from the regular budget or from the donors community.

In a different but related context, we would like to congratulate the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace, Mr. Adolph Ogi, whose Office, together with other bodies, has taken a number of actions to promote sport and physical education; the New York Office has joined in these efforts in an outstanding way.

Finally, we believe it necessary to establish strategic alliances among the United Nations, the private sector and civil society in order to mobilize resources and create national capacities. Here, foundations, non-governmental organizations and sports federations have a central role to play. At the same time, the United Nations should strengthen its ties with international organizations such as the Fédération internationale de football association (FIFA) and the International Olympic Committee.

As we promote sport, peace and development, we are facilitating the implementation of the internationally agreed development objectives, including those of the Millennium Development Goals, as my colleague from Benin has stated on behalf of the African Group. As a member of the Group of Friends of Sport for Development and Peace, Chile is satisfied with the work the Group has done thus far, and will continue to work actively with other delegations as we try to achieve the goals we have set for ourselves.

Mr. Naik (India): We thank the Secretary-General for his report on "Sport for peace and development: progress and prospects" (A/62/325 and Corr.1). We note the well-organized structure and good presentation of information in the report, which provides an overview of activities undertaken on various fronts by Member States, the United Nations system and other stakeholders. It also makes recommendations for further action based on lessons learned.

India supports the efforts of the Secretary-General to highlight the useful role that sport can play in consolidating peace and furthering development. Sport is an easy and relatively inexpensive way of engaging the energies of youth in a positive and constructive manner. It teaches the spirit of sportsmanship that generates tolerance of spirit and action and respect for the opponent. It also inculcates discipline through the observance of the rules of the game. It develops camaraderie and good fellowship

that enhances the ability of communities to coexist peacefully.

The contribution of sport to furthering development is also recognized. A healthy mind lives in a healthy body. Sport provides physical activity, enhances oxygen intake and improves stamina. It brings people together for a common purpose. Its enjoyable format provides a good vehicle for propagating difficult social messages. Sport improves productivity and fosters social harmony and discipline. Indeed, sport can play a subtle, positive and constructive role in development and peace.

India believes that activities related to sport and physical education are a necessary component of human resource development. India has a long tradition of sport and physical education. Ancient Indian scriptures and literature describe the important place in princely education of such sports as archery, weight-lifting and wrestling. A mastery over such sports was considered as important as the knowledge of scriptures. Education in modern India is trying to continue and build upon this heritage and respect for sport and physical education.

In view of the key role of sport and games in national life, the Government of India has taken a number of initiatives to improve the standard of sport in the country. There is wide recognition of the need for broad-basing sport and for the provision of modern sport infrastructure. The Government has made efforts towards upgrading the skills of the coaching fraternity, the creation of sport infrastructure and the construction of an adequate sport-science backup. Efforts are also being made to encourage national sport federations to make their operations more effective and focused.

The involvement of society at large, particularly business and industry, is adding to the efforts of the Government. To encourage sport and sportspersons, a number of prestigious awards are bestowed to recognize their achievements. Several schemes have been put in place to propagate sport and to provide incentives for sporting activities. These include schemes such as the Sports Fund for Pension for Meritorious Sportspersons, as well as the Promotion of Sports and Games in Schools programme.

While the welfare of young sportspersons is covered by the Sport Scholarship Scheme, a National Welfare Fund has been established to assist retired sportspersons. A National Sports Development Fund has been set up to mobilize resources. The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in the Government of India represents sport at the national level. The Government has also established the Sport Authority of India to pursue the twin objectives of broad-basing sport and nurturing talent in children through the provision of necessary infrastructure, equipment, coaching and other facilities. These include a Sports Medicine Centre and Dope Control Centre.

We agree with the Secretary-General on the need to enhance the use of sport to help reverse disease and obesity, especially among young people. The report mentions the role of sport in reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS. While sport may have only a limited role in this regard, the promotion of sport can play a more critical role in reversing the growing trend of juvenile diabetes in urban areas. Regular practice of a sport can also help lower anxiety and high blood pressure caused by the pressures of modern living among the younger generation of today.

We note from the report of the Secretary-General that despite uneven progress, there is evidence indicating a better integration of sport across all geographical regions. However, the report points out that the lack of adequate resources, facilities and trained personnel continues to be a key constraint in many countries. Developing countries have to deal with enormous challenges with limited resources. These challenges are even more daunting for the least developed countries.

The complexion of sport has undergone a transformation in the modern world. The pursuit of sport today requires the availability of modern and highly sophisticated equipment, infrastructure and training. The ready availability of and easy access to such facilities in the developed world tilts the international sporting arena towards the developed world. There is, thus, a solemn need for international cooperation and assistance for encouraging the development of sport infrastructure in developing countries.

In this context, we agree with the Secretary-General's recommendation to make sport and physical education more accessible to larger segments of the world's population, especially to those who lack the opportunity and facilities. We also agree with the need to promote investment in the expansion of sports infrastructure and facilities, including through

enhanced resources, sports sciences and sports medicine programmes, particularly in the developing world. We support the Secretary-General's call for greater efforts for promotion of sports and physical education. That could include advocacy through participation in sports and non-sporting events. We are convinced, however, that sporting activities themselves are the best advocacy tool for the promotion of sports. We hope therefore that the United Nations system will focus its efforts on promoting sports through sports themselves, rather than through conferences and meetings.

Sport is an inalienable part of the educational process and a factor for promoting peace, friendship, cooperation and understanding among peoples. We agree with the Secretary-General that sport and physical education are not luxuries in society, and much less so in the developing world. We must therefore invigorate our efforts for the promotion of sports for development and peace.

Mr. Mavroyiannis (Cyprus): Cyprus has had strong links with the Olympic concept in modern as well as ancient times — as matter of fact, since the inception of the Olympic Games in 776 B.C. — and I wish to make a few remarks.

At the outset, I would like to congratulate the Chinese delegation for tabling resolution A/62/L.2, entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal" and wish the Government of the People's Republic of China, the host of the 2008 Summer Olympic Games, every success in that endeavour. I wish also to express appreciation for the presence here today of the President of the International Olympic Committee, Mr. Jacques Rogge, as well as other distinguished representatives of the Olympic movement, within the framework of promoting the Games and the preservation of the Olympic ideals, including fair play.

Sport, especially in the context of the Olympic Games, whether as an historical or contemporary concept, is a momentous and perpetually relevant element in all facets of human life and no less in our work here at the United Nations.

Sport is an integral part of human development and well-being, both individual and collective. Its contribution to development, capacity-building, unity and bringing people closer together has been evidenced on many occasions. Often unnoticed, however, is the power of creating a culture of sport as an effective tool for ethos-building among the youth of all our countries.

Also, the focus of our discussion today is how the concept of sport, and the virtues it entails, relates to the core human instincts of peace and security. Let us take the tradition of the Olympic Truce as an example. The cessation of all hostilities before, during and after the Olympic Games in antiquity is a practice recalled and revered as much today as it was then. So why are we then unable today to cease hostilities on any grounds, including through the pursuit of sport, whose purpose is to remind us that humankind was created for pursuits more noble than conflict?

If the ancients, with their limited means of disseminating knowledge and information, were able to observe such a truce, despite the immense difficulties, why can we not, with all the means we have to ensure collective ethos and civilization and to protect human life as our most valued possession, achieve at least as much by establishing a corresponding contemporary practice? The task of ensuring safe passage for athletes to reach the Games through the Olympic Truce might be less pertinent now than in the past. But the biggest contribution of that tradition has never been one of practical arrangements.

The creation of a peaceful environment, with the hope that this would have implications more lasting than the duration of the Games themselves, was always consubstantial to the Olympic ideal. More importantly, inherent in the tradition of the Olympic Truce, there have always been three key messages: first, the futility of war, the denunciation of violence and subjugation, and the superiority of pursuits that bring people together; secondly, the quest for freedom, shared values, and the intrinsically noble character of fairness and synergy; and, thirdly, the recognition of their contribution to the prosperity of all and to the further development of culture and civilization.

However, we should recognize that the content of the draft resolution before us, to which we lend our support as we traditionally have done, has never been fully implemented in all its elements, despite its biannual adoption and unanimous support. We hope that its letter and spirit will gradually be embedded in international human custom and that its observance will be one of those instances when history will repeat itself.

Mr. Noghès (Monaco) (*spoke in French*): A few months from now, the People's Republic of China will be hosting the twenty-ninth Olympic Games followed by the Paralympic Games. The Olympics are traditionally the most widely followed sporting event throughout the world and that is because they inspire all peoples in all their diversity to come together in their admiration for athletes who are doing their best in peaceful competition.

As was the case for the athletes who met at each Olympic Games since the forty-eighth session, the General Assembly has revived the ancient Greek tradition of the Olympic Truce to recall the extent to which the Olympic ideal can and must be an example for promoting peace and understanding among peoples. Monaco continues to co-sponsor with pride and conviction the draft resolution entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal" (A/62/L.2).

Sport brings together positive energies, when practiced with respect for effort and work, without cheating nor the use of stimulants or doping substances. In hosting his counterpart Ministers of Sports on the occasion of the twelfth Games of the Small States of Europe, our Minister of Sports, Mr. Paul Masseron, Government Advisor for the Ministry of the Interior, stated that

> "doping cannot be accepted, neither in high-level sports where it jeopardizes competition nor in individual competition where it destroys the whole educational thrust of sport, because doping is no longer today a question of level, age or discipline".

Since 2003, the Principality of Monaco has had an antidoping committee that is involved in implementing antidoping policies in keeping with the objectives of the International Convention against Doping in Sport. Over 150 tests will be conducted in the Principality this year. His Serene Highness, Prince Albert II, former Olympic athlete and member of the International Olympic Committee, has been paying particular attention to ethics in sports. We therefore welcome the entry into force of the International Convention against Doping in Sport in February 2007.

With their breadth, the Olympic Games are a showcase for 36 different sports. The sense of brotherhood in sport is within everyone's grasp. From refugee camps to street children, from schools to business firms, sports promote the development of the human being.

A recognition of the humanist aspect of sport underlay the signing of an agreement between our Government and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on 27 June 2007, setting up an innovative programme on humanistic sport for the development of urban youth. Drawing on the educational values of humanist sport, the project is designed to contribute to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It aims to reintegrate young people in difficulty in disadvantaged areas. Cape Town, South Africa, was chosen for this partnership with UNDP. The establishment of a football training centre for young people is also being studied, along with literacy and professional training courses.

Members know Prince Albert II's commitment to the protection of the environment. The host of the next Games is the city of Beijing, and we congratulate Beijing on its efforts at "greening" the Games, as reflected in the report of the United Nations Development Programme. Indeed, this is a phenomenal task in terms of transport management, water purification, waste recycling and energy efficiency. New urban centres, with a forested park of 580 hectares, the use of solar energy — all of these are indispensable investments.

Last June, the Principality of Monaco hosted the twelfth Games of the Small States of Europe. Prince Albert II wanted to ensure that this event was ecologically effective. Following the event, a declaration was adopted by the heads of State or Government of the Principality of Andorra, the Republic of Cyprus, the Republic of Iceland, the Principality of Liechtenstein, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, the Republic of San Marino and the Principality of Monaco. The declaration recognized the important potential of sport as a vehicle for values and a factor in the creation of a true ethic of sustainable development. Secondly, it recognized that the sport must be in harmony with the environment. Thirdly, it stated that the Games of the Small States of Europe must respect the environment, and called in particular for carbon-neutral Games in order to minimize their environmental impact. The organizing country would commit itself to compensate for greenhouse gas emissions and any other negative impact relating to the Games or their preparation, through such initiatives to protect the environment as it deems most appropriate.

Finally, the signatories stated the intention to develop in their respective countries environmental awareness based on a spirit of solidarity and leading to environmentally friendly behaviour. At the initiative of the Prince Albert II Foundation, it was decided to measure the greenhouse gas impact of the Games and to reduce it by all means possible. Monaco will offset this, including by planting trees.

Mr. Rogachev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Sport, peace and development are closely interconnected. The absence of war is a precondition for sporting competition. Sporting competition is not a struggle between enemies, but rather a competition among partners in their common aspiration for development. In this period of globalization, when the world is facing new challenges and threats and when it is necessary to have a dialogue between civilizations, we are convinced that international cooperation in the area of sport can play an important role in overcoming national and religious enmity and in bringing together the world community.

The role of sport as an ambassador of peace is particularly significant when linked to the noble traditions of the Olympic Truce. It is necessary to inculcate in future generations a spirit of the culture of peace, non-violence and tolerance, showing that the Olympic ideal is not out of date and is still significant.

In this connection, Russia has sponsored and fully supports draft resolution A/62/L.2 on building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal, and we call on all to observe this Olympic Truce.

The flame of the Olympic torch should light the way, leading humankind into the third millennium: a beacon indicating a world without enmity and violence. Next year, this flame of peace will illuminate the ancient city of Beijing, the host of the 2008 summer Olympic Games. We sincerely wish our Chinese colleagues every success in organizing this global event.

Seven years from now, the Olympic baton will be passed to the Russian city of Sochi, which will host the Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games. We are convinced that the Olympics to be held in our country will provide a significant impetus to the Olympic Movement and strengthen the values of a healthy lifestyle. At present, Sochi is building the most modern sporting facilities and is working at full steam to improve its infrastructure so as to ensure the success of this major event.

Russia highly values the activities of the United Nations in enhancing international cooperation in sport and confirming the ideals of the sporting movement throughout the world. We welcome the joint initiative of the United Nations and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to promote the inclusion of sport and physical education in programmes in the fields of education, health, environmental protection, combating hunger and improving the status of women.

We believe that support for sport, including at the political level, may help countries achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). We welcome the report of the Secretary-General on sport (A/62/325 and Corr.1). A very important role here falls to Mr. Adolf Ogi, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace. We are ready to continue our fruitful cooperation with the Special Adviser, and we support the ongoing activities of the New York-based United Nations Office of Sport for Development and Peace, headed by Mr. Djibril Diallo.

Sport is a universal language, thanks to which competitors come from many countries, cultures and faiths. We can thus talk about the significant potential of sport for diplomacy as a way of ensuring a channel to promote a culture of peace and dialogue among civilizations. Pierre de Coubertin said that sport was an ambassador of peace and a reliable bridge of friendship and mutual understanding between peoples. We must make full use of its potential.

Mrs. Aitimova (Kazakhstan) (*spoke in Russian*): First of all, my delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report entitled "Sport for development and peace: progress and prospects" (A/62/325 and Corr.1). It gives us an overall assessment of the progress achieved over the past year on the national, regional and international levels in implementing strategies and programmes on sport for development and peace.

As noted in the report, sport has great potential in making a substantive contribution to enhancing peace and achieving development goals, as formulated in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The increasing role of sport in achieving international agreement in the field of development, including the

MDG targets, was reaffirmed by heads of State or Government at the 2005 World Summit.

In this context, we certainly value the measures undertaken by the Secretary-General in implementing the Action Plan intended to expand and strengthen United Nations partnerships with Governments, sport-related organizations and the private sector. The participation today by the President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), Mr. Rogge, in the consideration of this particular item, underscores the fact that this Organization of ours and all of its structures are actively working with this most prestigious sporting organization on a global level.

The delegation of Kazakhstan welcomes the entry into force on 1 February 2007 of the International Convention against Doping in Sport. We believe that the Convention will make a very significant contribution to preventing the use of doping in sport, and will do a lot to eradicate it. In this connection, we would like to note that an anti-doping laboratory for sports has begun operation, and in 2007 in Kazakhstan it was given full laboratory status from the World Anti-Doping Agency.

Kazakhstan welcomes the activities of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace and notes the importance of sport in achieving the goals of development and peace.

We would also like to note with satisfaction a global summit of young leaders held last year in New York under the auspices of the United Nations, which made possible a discussion on the important questions of propagating sport and mobilizing future youth leaders.

As we know, sport and physical education are an important way of teaching tolerance and a culture of peace, and also of bringing people closer together. In this connection, the delegation of Kazakhstan welcomes the activities of the Office of the Special Adviser and the Information Centres of the United Nations aimed at propagating the idea of sport as an instrument for development and peace, and also the measures undertaken to enhance the role of sport in building peace.

On behalf of our delegation, I would like to thank the delegation of China for its draft resolution on peace and building a better life on the planet through sport, and the implementation of Olympic sporting ideals. In this connection, Kazakhstan is one of the Members of the United Nations that co-sponsored this resolution "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal" (A/62/L.2). Of course, Kazakhstan will be most pleased to be participating in the twenty-ninth Olympic Games in a neighbouring country, and we have already been taking all of the necessary steps to ensure that we have as many spots as possible for our participants in these Olympic Games. We certainly hope that we will win a good number of medals as well.

Kazakhstan has been taking comprehensive measures to make use of sport to the benefit of peace. In December 2006 a Presidential decree confirmed our State's programme to develop physical education and sport in Kazakhstan for the years 2007 thru 2011. The programme calls for a set of measures aimed at ensuring participation in physical education and sport is as broad as possible, in particular among young people. This is important for improving their health, ensuring that we have many skilled athletes and for bringing our sportsmen up to the international level.

We are working to bring disabled persons into sports as well. A club of disabled sportsmen is operative in every region. In the south of Kazakhstan, we held our second Paralympic Games, with over 500 sports participants from all regions of the country. Considerable work has been done to develop boarding schools for children gifted in sports, regional Olympic-level training centres and Republican Schools for sports excellence. We would like to note that just this year, the Republic organized and held over 10,000 events on healthy-lifestyles, involving the participation of over 1.5 million people.

In 2011, Kazakhstan will be the host of the seventh Asian Winter Games, and active work is being done in our country today for holding this very important event. The appropriate Ministry has already engaged in negotiations with leading international architects. We have called for bids for building facilities near Almaty, and we are designating areas for these sports facilities. The overall expenditure will reach $1 billion.

Thus, my delegation believes that we must maintain the dynamism set by the United Nations and continue that educational path in implementing broader measures as well. This is something that we can do to enhance the cooperation and coordination between

Member States in order to come up with a general vision for the development of sport to benefit peace throughout the world.

Mr. Mourikis (Greece): It is a great honour for me to take the floor on agenda item 45 (b) in order to express my country's wholehearted support for draft resolution A/62/L.2.

Four years ago, Greece presented a similar resolution as it was preparing for the 2004 Athens Olympics. This year, it is China's turn to keep the tradition and table a resolution urging Member States to observe, within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations, the Olympic Truce during the twenty-ninth Olympic Games and Paralympic Games to be held in Beijing. The wide support extended to this year's resolution stresses the international community's recognition for the principles it embodies and our common goal: to celebrate the Games in peace, harmony and friendship. We wish China every success in organizing the Olympic Games.

In bringing the idea of the Olympic Truce to the forefront, we encourage the notion that it is possible to create lasting peace from a pause in hostilities. That is, in fact, how the Olympic Games were conceived in the first place. In antiquity, the implementation of the Olympic Truce entailed a cessation of all hostilities in order to allow the athletes and spectators to travel to and from Olympia to attend this sacred celebration of human achievement.

In today's world the message could not be more relevant. We strive for dialogue among civilizations and cooperation among the rich and the poor, yet everyday we witness our shortcomings. The Olympic Truce could be a constructive new approach to help resolve conflicts. The Olympic ideal speaks the universal language of peace, in which all peoples can communicate and share in its values.

The United Nations and the Olympic movement are natural allies. They share the same goals and observe the same principles. They are useful tools in the hands of the international community. It is up to us, the Member States, to seize the opportunity presented by this resolution and to observe the Truce for the benefit of our peoples. We express our appreciation and support to the International Olympic Committee for its tireless efforts to promote the Olympic Ideal and build bridges of understanding and cooperation.

Let me stress once again that by adopting, today, the resolution entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal" we take a positive stance towards life and reality, without any illusions. We simply state the obvious: that if we can have peace in the world for just 16 days, then maybe we can have it for much longer.

Before concluding, may I thank former Governor Pataki for his reference to the recent fires at the ancient sites of Olympia. Indeed, the world witnessed extraordinary human achievement, and I can assure the Assembly that Olympic torch will ignite again in Olympia before embarking on its long trip to Beijing.

Mr. Khalfallah (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): I should like to start by congratulating the Secretary-General on his report entitled "Sport for development and peace: progress and prospects" (A/62/235 and Corr.1), the title of which, by itself, carries hope and great significance for the future of sport as an activity that the United Nations is comprehensively supporting.

Tunisia would also like to express its gratitude to Mr. Adolf Ogi, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace, for all his efforts and for his activities to ensure the success of programmes to promote sport throughout the world and for the benefit of all.

Tunisia fully endorses the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Benin on behalf of the Group of African States and reaffirms its determination to continue its work to make sport an activity that brings peoples together and a factor for world peace and stability — two essential goals of our Organization.

Solidarity among peoples at the beginning of the twenty-first century is not a mere option; it is a necessity that, we are convinced, sport is capable of bringing to fruition. We support Mr. Ogi's activities to promote, in the words of the Secretary-General's report, "a common road map and coherent framework for action to build global partnerships around sport and physical education" (*A/62/325, para. 72*).

Indeed, our President, Mr. Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, decided to dedicate an entire year to physical education, in accordance with the Assembly's launch of the International Year of Sport and Physical Education 2005 (see resolution 59/10), during which the world celebrated sport through a broad range of diverse and

uniformly important activities, thereby highlighting the importance unanimously attach to sport and to the universal nature of this activity. Our duty is now to press on in this respect and to confirm that this was the correct choice, to which increasing resources are being allocated by everyone.

It is beyond dispute that sport today is of growing interest to the international community. This is seen in the vast number of sporting events, discussion forums and activities to popularize sports that have given rise to an international awareness that favours the role of sport as a fundamental support for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Sport is also a symbol of cooperation and of healthy, constructive friendship.

By sponsoring draft resolution A/62/L.2, entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal", Tunisia expresses once again its full commitment to the Olympic ideal. We remain convinced that the forthcoming Olympic Games in Beijing will be a complete success and a sporting and moral victory for all participants.

Tunisia is very pleased to note the Secretariat proposal regarding a fund for sport for development and peace and hopes that, once it is finalized, all the arrangements will allow for the effective implementation of the objectives we have set. Moreover, we are convinced that the formal establishment of the Office of the Special Adviser will help to promote the activities undertaken in the sphere of sport for development and peace and will prove to be a most valuable asset for the United Nations, which will thus have a tool to bring people together in a world that thirsts for dialogue, mutual understanding and tolerance.

The presence here of the President of the International Olympic Committee, the President of the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad and the Special Adviser for Sport for Development and Peace shows the scope and importance that sport has acquired and the need to ensure that this activity is supported by all.

Mr. Carmon (Israel): Allow me to congratulate Mr. Kerim on his leadership of the Assembly and to thank him for convening this important joint debate.

Israel is proud to lend its support to draft resolution A/62/L.2, entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal". Similarly, we welcome the report of the Secretary-General, entitled "Sport for development and peace: progress and prospects" (A/62/325 and Corr.1), which summarizes the steps taken during the first year of the three-year road map to implement sport for development and peace programmes.

Sport offers a common language that speaks of international friendship and harmony and that can bridge the global seams of friction. The spirit of healthy competition provides a channel through which people of different religious, cultural, racial and political backgrounds can interact and enhance their respect for one another.

Within the context of the United Nations, as the Secretary-General's report shows, sport contributes to achieving the Millennium Development Goals and peace, by raising awareness and promoting values of cooperation and mutual understanding. No doubt, using sport as a universal focal point for interaction will bear fruit in the promotion of education, health, development and peace.

In our region, we have tried to harness the spirit of sport to forge relationships and build bridges across the dark waters of conflict. We hope that these types of competitions will continue to develop and expand in the future. Israel has a visibly active network of organizations that sponsor sport for peace and development days and that bring children — Jews and Arabs, Israelis and Palestinians — together under the umbrella of sport. A number of sport for peace programmes and festivals occur regularly; notable among them are those sponsored by the Peres Center for Peace, founded by our current President, Shimon Peres. These sport and competition days emphasize teamwork and cooperation, alongside fostering commonalities and sharing.

Similarly, the legendary story of Sons of Sakhnin United, a multi-ethnic Israeli soccer team comprising Jews, Arabs and others, and its quest to win the Premier League in Israel, continues to inspire hope and confidence in the capacity for sport and competition to inculcate respect and mutual understanding. This year, the prominence and power of this Cinderella story was brought to wide attention with the release of a documentary film on the subject and its appearance in internationally recognized film festivals.

Sons of Sakhnin United embodies the message of sport as a medium for peace and understanding in another modality as well. The team plays in a stadium widely known around the country as the Doha Stadium, which was built with public funds largely from the State of Israel and the Qatar National Olympic Committee. This joint venture between Israel and Qatar is a sign of the quest for peaceful and neighbourly relations within our region and the willingness to cross boundaries to achieve peace and harmony through sport. The Sons of Sakhnin United team, as we speak, holds the third position in Israel's top soccer league.

Unfortunately, not all sporting events are carried out with the same positivity. Although it is a painful part of our history, it is also worth remembering what happened at the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich, when gunmen from the terrorist group Black September, disguised as athletes, broke into the Olympic Village and killed 11 Israeli athletes, coaches and referees. The reverberations of that abhorrent and monstrous act of terrorism are felt in Israel — and around the world, for that matter — to this very day.

In that regard, we hope that the upcoming summer Olympic Games, to be held in Beijing next year, will adhere to the values of sport as an ideal way to stimulate body, mind and spirit, and in turn overcome barriers of language, politics and religion. The abuse of sport and international competition for political purposes is an affront to the very ethos and virtues of the Olympic tradition.

On the other hand, we know that sport can be utilized for great good. Just two weeks ago, the Israeli delegation to the 2007 Special Olympics, held in Shanghai, returned home from the games with tremendous pride and in high spirits. The Special Olympics prove to the world that determination, will and faith in one's abilities can overcome any limitation, regardless of the challenge. The resilience and commitment of those athletes should inspire us to utilize sport as an expression of the boundlessness of the human potential.

While sport has the power to bring people together, it alone cannot foster enduring peace. Supporting factors — such as an interest in peace among different groups, media involvement, strong participation by civil society and dedication by sport organizations — are needed if sport is to be an effective vehicle of peace. Israel strongly believes that to be true. We call on the nations of the world to use the opportunities provided by sport to foster peace and development, and to continue promoting those supporting factors to ensure the widest possible appeal. Israel pledges itself to fully support such endeavours.

Mr. Seakamela (South Africa): We thank Mr. Srgjan Kerim, President of the General Assembly, for organizing today's debate on the Secretary-General's report on sport for peace and development (A/62/325 and Corr.1). We also wish to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for that comprehensive report.

Since its establishment, the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace has made significant strides towards the attainment of the objective of utilizing sport as a tool for development and peace. South Africa commends the work of the Office in New York and Geneva. Both offices have contributed to the advancement of advocacy work within the United Nations system and beyond aimed at promoting understanding and support for sport as a tool for development and peace.

South Africa is committed to the objectives related to the use of sport as a tool for development and peace. As a member of the New York-based Group of Friends of Sport for Development and Peace, we have worked with others to encourage Member States to actively integrate sport into their international cooperation and development policies through the implementation of relevant United Nations resolutions.

My delegation believes that sport provides a forum in which to learn skills and discipline, confidence and leadership, and that it teaches core principles, such as tolerance, cooperation and respect. Our leaders have persistently highlighted the potential that sport has in building social cohesion and national reconstruction and unity. In this connection, we remember how our nation was bound together in joy when we won the Rugby World Cup in 1995 and the African Soccer Cup of Nations in 1996, and more recently when we won the Rugby World Cup for the second time, earlier this year.

South Africa has also partnered and adopted measures, in compliance with General Assembly resolutions on sport for development and peace. In this context, since 2004 we have conducted the Siyadlala Community Mass Participation Programme and the

School Sport Mass Participation Programme. In addition, our country has partnered with other countries such as Angola, Australia, China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and others in the area of sport for development and peace. We have also ratified the UNESCO International Convention against Doping in Sport.

South Africa is honoured to have been awarded the rights to host the Féderation internationale de football association (FIFA) World Cup in 2010. This is the first time that this global game is being hosted on the African continent. The tournament is an important milestone for the entire continent, and we believe it provides our country, the region and the continent with a golden opportunity to boost our sport and tourism industries. The 2010 World Cup tournament can help advance our economic development to a higher notch and fast-track the attainment of elements of the Millennium Development Goals.

The African Union (AU) has declared 2007 the International Year of African Football, underscoring the United Nations view that sport can be an instrument to promote unity, solidarity and peace. In this context, the AU collaborated with the South African Government and the New York Office of the Special Adviser on Sport for Development and Peace on the activities for the International Year of African Football, as well as for the fiftieth anniversary of the Confederation of African Football and the lead-up to the 2010 World Cup.

My delegation expresses its appreciation for the contribution made by the New York Office of the Special Adviser on Sport for Development and Peace in shaping the concept, activities and innovative approaches of the International Year of African Football, which was launched at the eighth Summit of African Union Heads of State, held in Addis Ababa in January 2007. The Office's active participation in the technical workshop for the 2010 FIFA World Cup African Legacy Programme, which was held in Pretoria in March of this year, and in the first ministerial meeting of Ministers of Sport and Youth, which was held in Addis Ababa, was instrumental in enhancing the momentum of using sport as a tool for development and peace.

South Africa supports the efforts of the Office of Sport for Development and Peace focusing on the role of sport in peacebuilding activities. In this context, we underline the importance of strengthening the sporting programmes that were launched in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Liberia, in partnership with United Nations peacekeeping missions in those countries, and supported by other partners. We welcome the commencement of similar projects in other countries, such as Lebanon and Côte d'Ivoire.

In recognition of the progress made thus far in the area of sport for development and peace, it is important that we build on past success and establish more sustainable progress. In this context, we encourage the broader international community and, in particular, the United Nations system to provide support in promoting sport as a tool for achieving peace and development.

In conclusion, South Africa supports the draft resolution (A/62/L.2) introduced by the delegation of China.

The Acting President: I now call on the observer of the Observer State of the Holy See.

Archbishop Migliore (Holy See): The role of sport within and among societies can be traced to some of the earliest civilizations. However, never before has the practice of sport become as firmly established as it is today. Sport has become a mass phenomenon capable of engaging huge crowds on a grand scale, breaking down geographic, racial, social, economic, political and cultural barriers.

Next year, the global community will once again come together to celebrate the ancient tradition of the Olympic Games in its twenty-ninth modern edition, to be held in Beijing. As the world prepares for that important event, we are reminded of the role that sport can play in the life of every individual and society.

Citius, altius, fortius: those three Latin words, used a century ago by Father Henri Martin Dideon to describe his students' achievements in sport, were adopted as the Olympic motto because the aspiration to be "swifter, higher, stronger" aptly describes the goals of great athletes all over the world.

Sport practiced in a healthy and harmonious way is a means of bringing together peoples of different cultures and traditions in a respectful and peaceful manner. Through the greater use of sport as dialogue and encounter, the Greek tradition of the Olympic Truce can give way to genuine and long-lasting peace.

In fact, dialogue and encounter through sport hold great potential in the area of peacebuilding and conflict prevention. While the rule of law and justice remain the foundations of durable peace, sport provides a tool enabling warring factions to come together for a common purpose. Such moments of unity may be brief and at times fleeting; nonetheless, they are an important reminder that, in human experience, there are many more things that bind us together than there are things that tear us apart. In that regard, my delegation notes with appreciation the work of the United Nations New York Office of Sport for Development and Peace to foster such dialogue in conflict-ridden places such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Liberia. We look forward to seeing greater consolidation of its activity.

In addition to fomenting dialogue across cultures and fostering peace, sport can serve as a means for greater personal and social development. Through sport, people develop creativity and talent, overcome personal challenges, acquire a sense of belonging and solidarity and learn discipline and a sense of sacrifice. Those values redound to the benefit of the greater community and help us understand the value of the common good over personal glory. Thus, we encourage sports figures to be models for youth and to help foster the positive values of sport.

Today's society has seen an increasing number of cases of abuse and deviance in the practice of sport, which lead to a sport culture devoid of human values. However, the world of sport continues to have authentic role models and generous protagonists who strive to reclaim the ideal of sport as a real school of humanity, camaraderie, solidarity and excellence. A renewed and widely shared emphasis on a human-centred approach to sport would help ensure that the important virtues learned through sport become one of the means for developing and fostering healthy and responsible human interaction.

The Holy See's Office for Church and Sports was created with that ideal of sport in mind. It works with schools, youth groups, amateur sport associations and athletic professionals to promote a healthy approach to sport and to help young people understand the positive impact that sport values can have on both the local and global communities.

The Olympic creed reminds us that the most important thing in life is not triumph, but struggle. May the 2008 Olympic Games contribute to the common struggle to make the world a better place for one and all through the promotion of the inseparable and mutually reinforcing values of peace, development and full respect for basic human rights.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on agenda item 45 and its sub-items (a) and (b). Before proceeding to take action on draft resolution A/62/L.2, I should like to announce that, since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: Belize, the Gambia, Honduras, Lithuania and Zambia.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/62/L.2, entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal" under sub-item (b) of agenda item 45.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/62/L.2?

Draft resolution A/62/L.2 was adopted (resolution 62/4).

The Acting President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 45 and its sub-items (a) and (b).

Before I adjourn the meeting, and as announced earlier, I would like to invite members to remain seated for the informal segment after the adjournment of this meeting, to hear the President of the International Olympic Committee.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.